

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: **OCCUPANCY TAX COORDINATION**

DATE: JUNE 6, 2007

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS CAIMANO
KENNY
TESSIER
GABRIELS
MERLINO
HASKELL
MONROE

OTHERS PRESENT:

HAL PAYNE, COMMISSIONER OF ADMINISTRATIVE &
FISCAL SERVICES
JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD
SUPERVISORS F. THOMAS
BELDEN
GERAGHTY
O'CONNOR
KATE JOHNSON, TOURISM COORDINATOR
VONDA BEATTIE, SR. ACCOUNT CLERK, TOURISM
DEPT.
ROBERT BLAIS, MAYOR, VILLAGE OF LAKE GEORGE
DEBRA L. SCHREIBER, LEGISLATIVE OFFICE
SPECIALIST

Mr. Caimano called the meeting of the Occupancy Tax Coordination Committee to order at 11:26 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Gabriels, seconded by Mr. Haskell and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the May 10, 2007 Committee meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

Mr. Caimano apprised that Item No. 1 on the Agenda was a report on total revenues from the County Treasurer, which had been distributed to the Committee members. He added that this report was for informational purposes and the Committee members could review it at their convenience. In answer to a question from Mr. Haskell that the total collections for 2006 were over \$8 million, Mr. Caimano stated that there must be an error in the report, that would be corrected later.

Mr. Caimano stated that Item No. 2 on the Agenda was a funding request from the Village of Lake George for 2008, in support of the Lake George Visitor Center. He noted that there was a copy of a letter from Robert Blais, Mayor of the Village of Lake George, attached to the Agenda. *A copy of the Agenda and the letter from Mayor Blais are on file with the minutes.*

Motion was made by Mr. Kenny, seconded by Mr. Haskell to approve the request for funding, from the Village of Lake George for 2008, in support of the Lake George Visitor Center, in the amount of \$25,000.

Mr. Gabriels questioned if the funding was available in the 2008 County budget. Mr. Caimano replied that he was unsure at this time and added that there would be many changes to the budget in the upcoming year, with expenses for 2008 expected to be \$300,000 less than they were in 2007. He further added that the expenses for the first quarter of 2007 were down, in comparison to 2006. He expounded that he was unsure if the funding would be available in the 2008 County budget and added that it should not keep them from approving the funding request. He further added that if the funding request was approved, the County should be able to disburse the funds to the Village of Lake George by the end of 2007 or the first quarter of 2008, at the latest. He asked Mayor Blais if that time frame would be acceptable and Mayor Blais replied that the fiscal year for the Village of Lake George began on June 1st, so anytime between now and May 31, 2008 would be an acceptable time frame for the funds to be disbursed.

Mr. Monroe apprised that any contract written at this point, should state that funding is contingent on the occupancy tax collections and Mr. Caimano agreed.

After a brief discussion, Mr. Caimano called the question and the motion was carried unanimously to authorize a new contract with the Village of Lake George in support of the Lake George Visitor Center, commencing January 1, 2008 and terminating December 31, 2008, with an option to continue in 2009, for an amount not to exceed \$25,000. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes and the necessary resolution was authorized for the June 15, 2007 Board meeting.*

Mr. Caimano expounded that Item No. 3 on the Agenda was a request from the City of Glens Falls for funding to replace the seats at the Glens Falls Civic Center. He added that he felt it was proper to use Occupancy Tax funding to help pay for the new seats at the Civic Center. He further added that they could either fund the replacement of the seats or fund general upgrades to the Civic Center. He stated that he had consulted with Paul Dusek, County Attorney, and that Mr. Dusek said this was a proper expense of Occupancy Tax monies, as the Civic Center brings many overnight visitors to the area.

Motion was made by Mr. Monroe and seconded by Mr. Merlino to authorize Occupancy Tax funding for the replacement of the seats at the Glens Falls Civic Center.

Mr. Monroe apprised that the Committee had discussed, in the past, if capital projects qualified for funding under Occupancy Tax and added that he felt that they did. He further added that he felt that capital expenditures did bring more overnight visitors to the area, especially in the case of the Civic Center. He apprised that his only concern was that it had been stated by the press that these would be cushioned seats, and he questioned if that was necessary.

Mr. Caimano expounded that was the reason he would rather fund general upgrades to the Civic Center, as opposed to funding replacement of the seats. He said that \$50,000 a year for four years would allow the Civic Center to do what they felt was necessary to upgrade the facilities, as long as proper documentation was provided.

Mr. Kenny apprised that the City of Glens Falls Common Council had done a study to determine the difference in longevity and price between molded or cushioned seats and added that the price difference was insignificant; however, the longevity was much longer and repairs were much easier with the cushioned seats.

Mr. Caimano apprised that Senator Little had said the Lake Placid arena had molded seats and they have had no problems. He added that the price difference of \$20 a seat was not insignificant, as it amounted to \$100,000.

Mr. Belden stated that he felt it was a good idea to fund the Civic Center as large groups of overnight visitors came to the area to attend its events.

Mr. O' Connor expounded that molded seats have to be replaced periodically. He added that the Lake Placid arena was funded mostly by the State and could afford to replace molded seats when they break, which, he added, happens often. He further added that maintenance at the Civic Center is virtually non-existent, which meant that when the seats broke, they were almost never replaced. He apprised that at the meetings with the Adirondack Regional Chamber of Commerce it had been decided that the funds could be used for whichever capital improvement that the Civic Center felt were necessary.

Mr. Caimano stated that if the funds were for general capital improvements, it left the Civic Center Foundation open to sell nameplates for individual seats to develop additional funds. He added that his recommendation was that the Committee authorize funding to the Civic Center for capital improvements at \$50,000 a year for four years, as opposed to replacement of the seats.

Mr. O'Connor questioned if both of the local banks had agreed to purchase a certain number of seats, as part of local sponsorship and Mr. Caimano replied affirmatively.

Mr. Monroe stated that he would like to amend his motion to authorize occupancy tax funding for capital improvements to the Civic Center, in the amount of \$50,000 a year for four years.

Mr. Haskell questioned if the Civic Center would provide this Committee with a detailed list of the improvements they intended to make. Mr. Caimano replied that the Civic Center would have to submit a written report.

Mr. Gabriels stated that the last time that Mayor LeRoy Akins was at a Committee meeting, he had asked the Mayor for statistics on how widely the facility was used, as far as regionalization was concerned and he added that he had not yet been provided with those statistics. Mr. Caimano asked that a copy of the minutes be forwarded to the Mayor and the City of Glens Falls Common Council, along with a request that the Committee be provided the statistics that Mr. Gabriels requested.

After discussion, Mr. Caimano called the question and the motion was carried by majority vote to authorize a new contract with the City of Glens Falls for capital improvements to the Glens Falls Civic Center, in the amount of \$50,000 a year for four years, commencing June 15, 2007 and terminating December 31, 2010, with Mr. Gabriels voting in opposition.

As there was no further business to come before the Occupancy Tax Coordination Committee, on motion made by Mr. Monroe and seconded by Mr. Merlino, Mr. Caimano adjourned the meeting at 11:36 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra L. Schreiber, Legislative Office Specialist
Typed by Charlene DiResta, Legislative Office Specialist